

REMARKS

Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the present application in view of the amendments set forth above and the below remarks.

Claims 1-4 are pending in the application: Claims 3 and 4 are objected to, and claims 1 and 2 are rejected. Claims 2 and 3 are hereby canceled without prejudice. Claims 1 and 4 are amended, and claims 5 to 20 are hereby added. The pending claims in the application, after the amendments herein, are now claims 1, 4, and 5-20 (18 total claims), with claims 1, 5, 12, and 15 being in independent form.

Allowable Claims

Claims 3 and 4 were objected to as being dependent on a rejected base claim (claim 1), but the Examiner stated that claims 3 and 4 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Accordingly, Applicants have amended claim 1 (the base claim) to include the subject matter of claim 3, and claim 4 has been rewritten to depend from claim 1. Claims 2 and 3 have been cancelled. Applicants thus believe that claim 1 is in a condition for allowance and believe that the objections to claim 4 based on dependency on a rejected base claim has been overcome.

The Prior Art Rejections

The Examiner rejects Claims 1 and 2 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) over U.S. Patent #5907672 to Matze et al. ("Matze"). Claim 2 has been cancelled, thereby mooting the rejection of this claim. Claim 1 has been amended to include the subject matter of claim 3, which was indicated to contain patentable subject matter. Accordingly, Applicants believe that the prior art rejections have been rendered moot.

Newly Added Claims

Newly added independent claims 5, 12 and 15 are based upon the subject matter in claims 3 and 4, which were indicated by the Examiner to contain patentable subject matter. No new matter has been added, and Applicants believe that no additional search is required.

Accordingly, Applicants believe that independent claims 5, 12, and 15 (and claims dependent therefrom, namely claims 6-11, 13-15, and 16-20) are patentably distinct over the art of record and are in a condition for allowance.

The Examiner is respectfully invited to telephone the undersigning attorney if there are any questions regarding this Amendment or this application.

Applicant does not acquiesce to any assertion made by the Examiner not specifically addressed herein. In addition, the amendments contained herein are made to expedite allowance of the case and Applicant reserves the right to pursue the originally-filed and other claims in continuation applications without prejudice.

The Assistant Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge payment of any additional fees associated with this communication or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 500845.

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Respectfully submitted,

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